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## Seattle Department of Parks and Recreation

Kenneth R. Bounds, Superintendent

### Homer Harris Park November 12, 2003 meeting summary

A preferred schematic design for Homer Harris Park was presented to the community on November 12 by Cathy Tuttle, Seattle Parks Planner and Steve Worthy, Worthy and Associates Landscape Architects. Central Area Artist Monad Elohim and Robert Stephens, Jr. from the Central Area Arts Commission discussed the Homer Harris Park art plan. Colleen Browne, the Seattle Parks Project Manager who will oversee Homer Harris Park construction was introduced.

The community discussed how the park design elements can serve neighborhood needs and pay homage to the life of Dr. Homer Harris, with art, a "reaching for greatness" stretching area, a play area that emphasizes mental and physical challenges, a human unity plaza, and a healing and restorative garden. The concept is on-line at <http://www.cityofseattle.net/parks/proparks/projects/HomerHarrisPark.htm>

**The public is invited to testify at the Park Board briefing and public hearing on Homer Harris Park at 7PM on December 11, 2003. The Park Board will make a recommendation on Homer Harris Park on January 8, 2004. Park Board meetings are held at 100 Dexter Avenue North. For more information, please contact Project Planner Cathy Tuttle (206)684-7033 [cathy.tuttle@seattle.gov](mailto:cathy.tuttle@seattle.gov).**

#### **Community questions at the November 12 meeting:**

1. Can this park accommodate dogs? *This will not be an off-leash dog park. However, pet owners with leashed pets are welcome in the park.*
2. How will this park be lit? *The park will not be lit internally. The community may elect to work with other City departments after the park is established to make sure adequate street lighting is available adjacent to Homer Harris Park.*
3. Can this project fix the broken streets and sidewalks near the park? *Pro Parks funding is limited to the park site. Parks will provide minor upgrades to the parking strip area but the community will need to determine street improvements with other City departments.*
4. Can we eliminate the play area? *While there is a nearby play area (Plum Tree Park), Parks has kept a small play structure in the north end of the park to activate the space and make the park more attractive to nearby families and the children who use the YMCA across the street. The play structure was significantly reduced from*

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#### **❖Planning and Development Division ❖**

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*that proposed in earlier design alternatives. The designer will also work with the project artist to determine if a more imaginative play structure – perhaps one that can be used by adults as well as children – can be built within the existing budget.*

5. *Can the park have a drinking fountain? There will not be a drinking fountain in the park because of maintenance considerations. A water source will be accessible for scheduled public events.*
6. *When will construction start and how will parking be impacted? Construction will begin in early summer, and continue through early autumn 2004. Parks will put up signs at the park when a construction schedule has been finalized. There will be no street parking adjacent to the park throughout most of the summer of 2004.*
7. *How can teens be involved in the park? Teens from the Garfield Teen Life Center, under the direction of Teen Leader James Bush, have visited the park site and participated in all community meetings. Teens will assist in plant selection for the healing and restorative garden and received a grant from Sustainable Seattle for an art project in Homer Harris Park.*

### **Project Background**

In the 1990s, the Central Area neighborhood plan identified the need for a park in the Madison and 23rd Avenue area. The 2000 Pro Parks Levy included funds to acquire and develop a small park in the neighborhood.

In 2002, an anonymous donor gave \$1.3 million to the Seattle Parks Foundation for a new Central Area park, doubling the size of the park to one-half acre, increasing park development funding, and creating a small maintenance endowment. The donor requested the park be named after Dr. Homer Harris. This donation represents one of the largest donations in the history of Seattle Parks and Recreation.

Dr. Homer Harris is one of Seattle's most beloved and respected athletes and physicians. Homer E. Harris's grandparents arrived in Seattle in the 1890's. His mother was born here in 1894, when there were few African-American families in the area. Following the example of his family, Harris has been a pioneer for much of his life. Dr. Harris, one of the city's most prominent and beloved doctors for 43 years, was also one of Seattle's greatest athletes. He was recently inducted into the Iowa Athletic Hall of Fame. Dr. Harris has said that sports were a tool he used to get ahead in the world. It led him to an athletic scholarship at Iowa, a stint in the Army, and eventually to medical school. Dr. Harris currently lives on Queen Anne Hill with Dorothy, his wife of over 50 years

A preferred schematic design for Homer Harris Park was developed by Worthy and Associates, Landscape Architects, with input from three community meetings and two Seattle Design Commission meeting held in the fall of 2003. Over 100 community members participated in these meetings. A "Friends of Homer Harris Park" group held several meetings to define park art and history elements.